

## Effectiveness of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy on Test Anxiety among High School Girls in Tehran Fifth District

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### Abstract

Regarding the fact that test anxiety is a noticeable problem for students and that it can result in failure in academic performance, the current study aimed at determining the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy on students' anxiety. The study was carried out by means of quasi-experimental research method using pretest-posttest design with experimental and control groups. Data were analyzed with SPSS software using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The results showed that the Acceptance and Commitment therapy was effective in decreasing test anxiety in experimental group. Therefore it is recommended that this treatment be applied by specialists, in general, and counselors, in particular, to avert the adverse effects of test anxiety on academic achievement.

*Keywords: Acceptance and Commitment-Oriented therapy, Test anxiety, Students.*

### Data gathering

To collect the intended data, Sarason Test Anxiety Questionnaire (1960) was given to participants. For this purpose, one high school was selected on the basis of randomly sampling and then thirty students who have the highest extent of test anxiety were selected and randomly assigned to experimental and control group



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### Comment

Among the limitations of the current study, a point can be made that the research was carried out on girls; there was not sufficient time to pursue the findings, absence of different age groups. Therefore the prospect researchers are suggested that do additional research on this theme among the boys and other age groups so as to increase the estimate of the methods by more confidently

### Results

Table 1: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for test anxiety

Group	Significance	Statistic	Degree of Freedom
Pretest	0.05	0.81	30
Posttest	0.05	1.07	30

$P > 0/05$

Table 2: The results of ANCOVA

Source of variation	Sum of Squared	Degree of Freedom	Mean of Squared	F	Significance	Eta Squared
Group	486.019	2	486.019	598.133	0/01	0.593
Anxiety	510.45	1	510.045	12.51	0.01	0.673
Error	224.98	27	638.3			

### Conclusion

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) causes the students to live in present time, accept their thoughts, decrease their avoidances, live on the basis of personal values which, all together. Result in individual purposefulness and feeling of valuableness, and finally lowering anxiety.

It seems, according to the findings of the current research, that ACT approach decreases the extent of students' anxiety.

The results of this current study draw attention to the role of test anxiety and its effects on individual performance. Since the greater extent of the test anxiety can lead to falling in academic performance and consequently undermining economical capitals in the society. It is necessary that counselors, use to findings the current study's and ACT approach to decrease the anxiety among students so that maintained their psychological well-being and prevent the drop out in academic. In addition, they need to take urgent initiatives to prevent the spread of these disorders

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## Abstract

Regarding the fact that test anxiety is a noticeable problem for students and that it can result in failure in academic performance, the current study aimed at determining the effectiveness of acceptance and commitment therapy on students' anxiety. The study was carried out by means of quasi-experimental research method using pretest – posttest design with experimental and control groups. To collect the intended data, Sarason Test Anxiety Questionnaire (1960) was given to participants. For this purpose, one high school was selected on the basis of randomly sampling and then thirty students who have the highest extent of test anxiety were selected and randomly assigned to experimental and control group. Data were analyzed with SPSS software using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The results showed that the Acceptance and Commitment therapy was effective in decreasing test anxiety in experimental group. Therefore it is recommended that this treatment be applied by specialists, in general, and counselors, in particular, to avert the adverse effects of test anxiety on academic achievement.

**Key Words:** *Acceptance and Commitment-Oriented therapy, Test anxiety, Students.*

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## Introduction

A number of students undergo falling in their academic achievements in spite of having capability and aptitude to pursue their academic achievements, in some cases, are made to drop out school. There are some factors at work in this case of which test anxiety can be mentioned. There are some factors that are effective in this regard, of which test anxiety can be mentioned. Test anxiety is a stressful feeling, a considerable and prevalent fear that can appear before the exam, during that, and after the exam and which can accordingly bring about falling in performance reduction learning, and finally lead to drop in grades. This distress is felt mainly during studying the lessons or when one thinks about probable consequences of the test time (Spielberger, & Vagg, 1995).

Sarason (1980) has also defined test anxiety as mental preoccupation which that is characterized by underestimation and doubt about self-abilities, and often lead to negative cognitive appraisal, lack of concentration, adverse undesirable physical reactions, and finally failure in academic performance.

According to estimations of researchers in different studies, the extent of test anxiety prevalence among students was reported to be within the range of ten to thirty percent (McReynolds, Morris & Kratochwill, 1983). This estimation has been reported to be 17.20 percent for Iranian high school students (Abolghasemi, 2002).

The findings of various researches indicated the effect of acute test anxiety in such a way that its effect on endocrine glands, on providing the preconditions for temporary forgetting, and perceptual fallacy (Afrooz, 1991), its effect on blood biochemical factors as risk factor in cardio-vascular diseases (Samavat 1994), on academic drop-out (Biabangard, 2002) was approved. Majority of the time these reactions and responses are logical and vital. But its abnormal position can exert influence on a great range of individual performance (Hembree, & Dick, 2006). An individual having a higher level of test anxiety was doomed to be overwhelmed by negative thoughts which are mainly focus to comparing one's own performance with others, the results of failure and lack of success, low level of confidence in performance, extreme concern, the feeling of lack of preparation for the test, and loss of self-value, which accordingly result in falling of individual performance (Depreeuw, 1984; Hembree, 1990; & Morris, 1981).

Do not treatment these disorders impose the high costs to society more than treatment them. as it can inflict abundant budget on the society to the extent that millions and millions of dollars are spent on trying to get rid of anxiety including the doctors' diagnosis expense and making use of psychological amenities and services annually (annually services). In addition, given the chronic position of disorders they can, in long term, affect life quality and optimization of the individuals. However, it seems that we need to modify our performance, meaning that we should revise our assumptions and attitudes with regard to anxiety-related problems and their treatment in particular to the underlying cause that converts anxiety to anxiety disorders.

Internal processes in anxiety-related disorders (avoiding the situation or controlling unsatisfying affections) have become more common in most part of the world. As we learn from the very childhood that we should avoid hot objects and sharp tools, we also learn how to avoid mental pain and sufferings. But the strategies we apply in removing the source bringing the damage and suffering are rarely efficient as far as our thoughts and emotions are